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29 August 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy to the DCI for Resource Management

VIA:

Director, Program Assessment Office

FROM:

SUBJECT: Post Mortems as a Source of Program/Budget

1. Background: This memo summarizes the results of a brief review of post mortem of crises and perceived intelligence failures as a possible source of major program/budget issues. Thirteen case studies were reviewed, twelve done by the IC Staff between 1973 and 1977 and the most recent by the HPSCI on Iran (January 1979). These are listed in Attachment 1. We also examined an historical review of crisis warning (August 1979) prepared by the staff of the HPSCI. Since 1978, responsibility within the Intelligence Community for producing post mortems has been shifted to NFAC, specifically, the Senior Review Group. However, no post mortems appear to have been done by that Group.

2. Description of the Post Mortems:

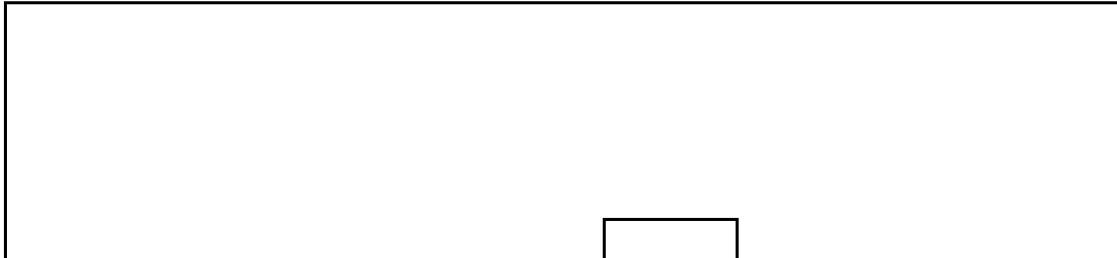
o Each analysis centered on a specific single event or development* with an emphasis on explaining what went wrong in each case, with no reference to prior post mortems. In particular, recommendations and attitudes formed in one case study were sometimes contradictory to those reached in others. For example, the general criticism of the Intelligence Community on the need to provide for competing minority views and to avoid awaiting certainty in warning (cited in the post mortems on the '73 Arab-Israeli War and the 1974 Cyprus crisis) was followed by a severe criticism of DIA in 1975 for sending out an uncoordinated false alarm of the possibility of a renewed war between Egypt and Israel. (Attachment 2 provides the three-page Background, Conclusions, and Recommendations of that post mortem.)

*By contrast the HPSCI study of warning was based on a review of five crises, from Pearl Harbor to the October 1973 War, with some comments on events in the last two years. This study did systematically discuss both analysis and resource related issues, concentrating on I&W center support.

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o The analyses concentrated on "quality of analysis" issues, with an emphasis on explaining what went wrong given the available resources, rather than deriving lessons for how things could operate differently in the future. (Two of the studies were "Collection Strategy Reports," and these had extensive discussions on collection tasking.) With the exception of a strongly expressed desire in the earlier studies for more timely imagery, resources were largely accepted as given.



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3. Conclusions:

o The past post mortem studies do not provide a useful source of new program/budget issues. The reasons for this include the lack of attention to resource implications and the failure to consider prior studies. Moreover some of the problems mentioned (e.g., collection timeliness) have been largely solved in the meantime.

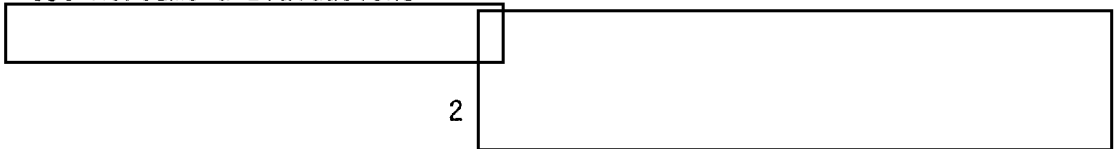
o If post mortem studies are undertaken by NFAC in the future, the scope should be broad enough to surface any important resource management issues. This could be encouraged by involving RM Staff as participants in the study or by requesting early in the study that a briefing be given at the end of the study on the implications for resource allocation.

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2 Attachments:

Att. 1: Post Mortems & Evaluations

Att. 2:



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